

NAFTA has also contributed to the prosperity and stability of our closest neighbors and two of our most important trading partners. NAFTA aided Mexico's rapid recovery from a severe economic recession, even as that country carried forward a democratic transformation of historic proportions.

NAFTA is an integral part of a broader growth strategy that has produced the strongest U.S. economy in a generation. This strategy rests on three mutually supportive pillars: deficit reduction, investing in our people through education and training, and opening foreign markets to allow America to compete in the global economy. The success of that strategy can be seen in the strength of the American economy, which continues to experience strong investment, low unemployment, healthy job creation, and subdued inflation.

Export growth has been central to America's economic expansion. NAFTA, together with the Uruguay Round Agreement, the Information Technology Agreement, the WTO Telecommunications Agreement, 22 sectoral trade agreements with Japan, and over 170 other trade agreements, has contributed to overall U.S. real export growth of 37 percent since 1993. Exports have contributed nearly one-third of our economic growth—and have grown three times faster than overall income.

Workers, business executives, small business owners, and farmers across America have contributed to the resurgence in American competitiveness. The ability and determination of working people across America to rise to the challenges of rapidly changing technologies and global economic competition is a great source of strength for this Nation.

Cooperation between the Administration and the Congress on a bipartisan basis has been critical in our efforts to reduce the deficit, to conclude trade agreements that level the global playing field for America, to secure peace and prosperity along America's borders, and to help prepare all Americans to benefit from expanded economic opportunities. I hope we can continue working together to advance these vital goals in the years to come.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, July 11, 1997.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE QUINCY LIBRARY GROUP FOREST RECOVERY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HERGER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, this week marks a monumental breakthrough for resolv-

ing conflict over forest management in our national forests. By passing the Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act of 1997, we sent a message to America that local compromise and community consensus is the new way of doing business on environmental issues. For more than 15 years environmentalists and members of the forest products industry have waged war over managing western forests.

In 1993, Bill Coates, Plumas County supervisor from Quincy, CA, took up the challenge of breaking the gridlock over forest management. He did so by arranging a meeting with environmental attorney Michael Jackson and Sierra Pacific Industries forester Tom Nelson. They met in the library because they knew they wouldn't yell at each other. QLG is now a coalition of 41 local environmentalists, forest products industry representatives, public officials, and concerned citizens who meet each month at the Quincy Library to discuss ways to improve local forest health. This program has been endorsed by local environmental organizations including the Plumas Audubon Society, the Friends of the Plumas Wilderness, the Sierra Nevada Alliance, and the Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council. At the heart of their discussions is the overriding threat that fire will destroy the forests before any action can be taken. Nationwide, last year more than 5.8 million acres burned with total fire suppression costs close to \$1 billion. The group turned to the best science available, including the recently released Sierra Nevada ecosystem project [SNEP] report which defines, among other things, the elements of a healthy forest. H.R. 858 takes the first vital step toward conflict resolution of environmental issues across the Nation by implementing the QLG proposal as a 5-year pilot project on three of northern California's national forests.

This legislation passed with a recorded vote of 429 to 1. It is fitting that a plan born from consensus would, in the end, pass the House of Representatives with a strong consensus vote. The QLG plan represents an entirely new approach to managing our Federal forests. We now have a local group bringing local solutions to Washington instead of Washington forcing solutions on local communities. I want to thank everyone who played a part in making this happen. This could never have happened without all 41 members of the Quincy Library Group; especially Bill Coates, Tom Nelson, Michael B. Jackson, and Linda Blum. This is truly their legislation. I want to salute them and their efforts. This is the way government should function. I also want to thank DON YOUNG, HELEN CHENOWETH, DAVID DREIER, BOB SMITH, Speaker GINGRICH, TOM DELAY and the entire leadership, JIM SEXTON, WAYNE GILCHREST, TOM CAMPBELL, SHERRY BOEHLERT, VIC FAZIO, PETER DEFazio, GEORGE MILLER, and every one of the 429 Members of Congress who supported this legislation. I would also like to thank the committee staff whose understanding and dedication brought this legislation to fruition.

Particularly I would like to thank Duane Gibson, Bill Simmons, Anne Heissenbuttle, Lloyd Jones, Liz Megginson, Dave Tenny and from my own staff John Magill, Fran Peace, Rich Nolan, Steve Thompson, Dallas Scholes, Dave Meurer, Dave Oleander, Mike Digiordano, Patsy Atkins, Kathy Summers, Donna Burton, Lemoine Sharpe, Ron Shinn, Katy-Duke Chamberlin, Annette Gatten, Lisa

Strohman, and George Morris. This is a great victory. We have finally shown that compromise and bipartisan effort does pay off. Again, thank you for your support and for helping us save the environment in northern California. I hope this bill will move expeditiously through the Senate and eventually be signed into law. I would also encourage that we take the momentum from this bill and use our new-found ability to compromise in a way that makes this Congress a success for America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE AGENDA OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I took out this 5-minute special order to hopefully bring some perspective to some of the things that were said here in the House this week.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said over and over again that the agenda for the majority party, at least, in the House over the past several weeks has been threefold; one, to move toward a balanced budget; two, to reduce the tax burden on the American people; and three, to save Medicare.

I would like to talk about the first two of those three issues for just a couple of minutes, as I said, to try to bring some perspective to this week's debate. I recently read an article that was written, an op ed piece, by an individual that I know who is quite famous in the economic world. His name is Milton Friedman. He is a fellow at the Hoover Institute. He wrote about the economy of this country and, because of what has happened, is in the process of happening in Hong Kong, compared our economy with the economy and the historical perspective of Hong Kong.

He noted in his article that the economy of the United States on a per capita basis used to be seven times larger than the economy of Hong Kong. In other words, for every man, woman, and child in this country, we had seven times more economic power than an individual in Hong Kong.

Over the years since as we have moved through history the two countries have actually come much closer together, because today on a per capita basis we are no longer seven times bigger than the Hong Kong economy. As a matter of fact, we are almost the same; a difference of just 7 percent. In other words, our total economy on a per capita basis is just 7 percent larger than Hong Kong's. In other words, we have come from a situation like this to a situation on a per capita basis where we are almost the same.

The majority party here recognizes that the kind of growth that we would like to see economically is, in a sense, demonstrated by Milton Friedman's remarks in his article, because we would like to see our economy continue to grow, and for individuals to prosper as they once did. That is exactly why we think it is very important to balance the budget and to reduce taxes.

Mr. Speaker, a lot was said around here this week about reducing taxes. We believe that it should be done in an extremely fair way. That is why, as this chart to my left shows, 76 percent of the tax relief that the Republican party has presented to the American people and in fact passed goes to people who make less than \$75,000 a year. They are the workhorses in our economy. They are the families who sit around the dinner table each night and talk about the day's activities. They are the families that also plan for their tomorrows.

We wanted those people to have the benefit of the tax cuts. That is why we did it in a very balanced way, as the next chart also demonstrates. This shows American taxpayers from the lowest income 20 percent, through the highest income 20 percent. We tried to balance our tax cuts so we would not change the distribution of who pays how much in terms of the total tax load that is sent here to Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, under the current tax plan as it exists today, 63 percent of the total dollars that are sent here are paid by the highest 20 percent. That is way over on the other end there, demonstrated by the red bar. The yellow bar shows that under the Republican tax plan, 63 percent will still continue to be paid by the highest 20 percent.

The same is true of the next percent, the percentage between 60 percent and 80 percent. Under the current tax plan passed in 1993 by the Democrats and Bill Clinton, 21 percent of the total tax load is paid by that quintile, as we call it, and under the Republican tax plan, 21 percent will be paid by that same quintile. The same is true of people who are in the third quintile, in the second quintile, and in the very lowest quintile, which does not change either.

So as we move toward a smaller Government, as we move toward a less expensive Government, as we move toward an economy that is what it used to be, we believe it should be done in a balanced and fair way. That is what my friends on the other side of the aisle have been disagreeing with throughout this week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. ETHERIDGE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ETHERIDGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NORM THOMPSON, ITS EMPLOYEES AND ASSOCIATES, FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION AND EFFORTS TO HELP WEST VIRGINIA FLOOD VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, during today's long and sometimes contentious debate we often look for good news. I am happy to say that as the legislative day draws to a close, I have good news to report to the House of Representatives, good news and also some thanks to offer; thanks to the company Norm Thompson, a well-known national mail order business whose corporate distribution center is in Kearneysville, WV, relatively close to Washington, DC, about an hour and a half's drive from here in Jefferson County, because week after next Norm Thompson is going to make an \$800,000 donation to a West Virginia charity to assist flood victims.

That \$800,000 donation is going to take the form of 44,000 units of men and women's clothing and footwear to be distributed to flood victims throughout our State of West Virginia. Norm Thompson will partner in this endeavor with Roadway Express, and they will transport the merchandise free of charge from the Norm Thompson distribution center in Kearneysville to Charleston, WV, on the other side of the State, for distribution by the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Services.

Mr. Speaker, this is an extremely important gift and effort by Norm Thompson. Five times within the last year and a half West Virginia has been torn by major floods. I have one county in my congressional district, Randolph County, that has four times in the last year and a half been declared a Federal disaster area. We had four floods in 1996, and then again in February of 1997 a flood that tore through 16 counties, including many of our most populous areas.

So this effort by Norm Thompson and the hundreds of men and women who work for this corporation, headquartered in Oregon, but with its major warehouse distribution center in West Virginia, this effort will assist thousands of West Virginians as they recover and begin to rebuild their lives.

I think it is important to note that the chairman, John Emrick of Norm Thompson, said the donation is the first of many planned, noting the number of floods that West Virginia had had, and also saying, it is important to match our donation to the immediate needs of helping flood victims get back on their feet again. They are donating this to the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Services, a nonprofit corporation. They will in turn distribute this across the State.

Norm Thompson is a relatively new member of our corporate community in

West Virginia, a very valued one, but already employing hundreds of West Virginians. I know, having met personally with the CEO and the other top management, as well as many of the employees, I know how excited we are in West Virginia to have them as a corporate citizen.

I want to thank Norm Thompson and its many employees and associates for making this gift possible, and for their obvious commitment to West Virginia; not only for doing good business, but for being a good citizen, corporate and otherwise. I know that thousands of West Virginians as well thank Norm Thompson for this extremely generous gesture. We look forward to working with them in the future.

We thank them for recognizing needs that are present and we are excited about the opportunities that Norm Thompson offers, not only, as I say, in business, but also in being a member of our corporate community.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS SHOULD USE THE SAME NUMBERS TO COMPUTE THE BENEFITS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE TAX RELIEF PLANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about tax relief, tax relief which, in my opinion, and I think in the opinion and view of the vast majority of American families, is long overdue.

We were talking earlier with some of my colleagues about college commencement addresses. Some of us are asked to give a commencement address during the late spring and early summer of the year, and most of us do not remember who the commencement speaker was at our own commencement, particularly our college commencement.

I am one of the few who probably does remember, because the director of the United States Census was there to give our commencement address when I was in college. It was interesting to look back about what it was like growing up then, and the difference then. I was a baby boomer. I was born in 1951.

The Speaker that spoke at our commencement address, the director of the United States Census, told us on that day that there were more kids born in 1951 than in any other year. I represent the peak of the baby boomers. I remember, we were talking about what it was like to grow up in the 1950s.